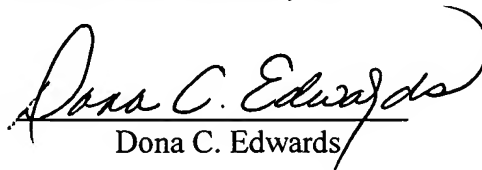


**REMARKS**

Applicants respectfully request that the above amendments be entered for purposes of the present application. Claims 1 to 18, as filed in the International Patent Application, have been amended to correct minor informalities, and are therefore presented for consideration. A section title and the abstract have also been amended herein to correct minor informalities. It is submitted that no new matter has been added.

This Preliminary Amendment is believed to be timely filed. If a petition for extension of time and/or any other fees are required, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is specifically authorized to charge such fee to Deposit Account No. 50-0518 in the name of Steinberg & Raskin, P.C. An early and favorable action on the merits is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,  
STEINBERG & RASKIN, P.C.

By:   
Dona C. Edwards

Reg. No. 42,507

Steinberg & Raskin, P.C.  
1140 Avenue of the Americas  
15<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10036  
(212) 768-3800  
(212) 382-2124 fax